

TRANSMOUNTAIN WATER DIVERSIONS

Colorado River Water Conservation District Policy Statements:

The Colorado River Water Conservation District believes there is no current or reasonably foreseeable need for new transmountain diversion projects. Transmountain diversion of Colorado River water results in adverse economic, environmental, and recreational impacts. Front Range water demands can be met through a combination of better groundwater management, conservation, reuse, system interconnections, re-operations, and in-basin transfers and exchanges.

Nevertheless, transmountain diversion proposals are likely to persist. Accordingly, the Colorado River Water Conservation District will continue its historical opposition to ill-advised proposals and pursuit of full mitigation for responsible proposals that include benefits for western Colorado.

Present and future West Slope water uses, including environmental and recreational needs, must be recognized and protected.

Background:

The primary goal of the Colorado River Water Conservation District (River District) is the protection of existing water uses and preservation of future economic opportunities for the residents of Western Colorado. The River District is committed to meeting the present and future water needs of its residents.

As identified in the state's Metropolitan Water Supply Investigation (MWSI) and the Senate Bill 96-74 study, nearly 400,000 acre feet of legally usable water is currently available annually without construction of any new projects. Although these studies addressed only the Denver metropolitan areas from Douglas County to Denver's northern suburbs, similar opportunities for additional water supplies, such as water reuse, conservation, re-operation, improved groundwater management, water sharing, in-basin transfers and exchanges, and others, exist for other areas of Colorado's rapidly growing Front Range.

The more recent State-wide Water Supply Investigation (SWSI) identified more than 600,000 acre feet of new water supplies that will be required statewide by 2030 in addition to currently planned water development projects. SWSI, however, has not yet identified sources for this additional supply, nor quantified the environmental and recreational needs of individual basins.

The River District supports the completion of the SWSI study and the implementation of the initial recommendations of the MWSI study. Additionally, the River District is involved in and committed to several cooperative efforts designed to address or meet specific, identified Front Range water supply problems. Presently, these include: The Eagle River Memorandum of Understanding which seeks to identify and develop additional Eagle River water supplies for both East Slope (Colorado Springs and Aurora, and Denver) and Eagle River basin water users in a manner acceptable to West Slope interests; the Douglas County Water Resource Authority-Denver Water-River District

collaborative water supply investigation addressing water supply needs of the Authority's members in Douglas and Arapahoe Counties; and the Upper Colorado River study addressing water supply, water quality, instream flow and water-based recreation needs in the Upper Colorado River basin. The River District acknowledges that any or all of these efforts may result in some additional transmountain water diversions, but any such diversion will be accomplished only with the acceptance and involvement and to the mutual benefit of East Slope and West Slope interests.

Western Colorado's economy is increasingly dependent on tourism-related construction and recreational industries that rely on adequate stream flows and healthy river systems. As such, adequate protections for all Western Colorado water uses, including non-consumptive environmental and recreational uses, benefit the entire state.

Establishment of adequate protections for instream flows, recreational lake and stream levels, and water quality, especially in the headwaters regions, protects our high mountain valleys and preserves opportunities for future consumptive and non-consumptive water uses.

Adopted March 16, 2000; *revised July 19, 2005*